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ABSTRACT

This document presents step-by-step guidelines to help communities and organizations implement youth-led research, evaluation, and planning (Youth REP) as a way of empowering youth to participate in community development and social transformation. The guide offers an overview of youth-led research and evaluation project stages and critical insights from project facilitators, youth evaluators, and community members who have used the Youth REP approach to address a wide range of issues such as enhancing public health, strengthening after-school programs, reforming the juvenile justice system, and improving public schools. The introduction explains the conceptual foundations of Youth REP. Part 1 offers guidance on assessing organizational readiness to take on youth-led projects and gives advice from youth evaluators and their host organizations. Part 2 provides a detailed overview of the Stepping Stones process for youth-led research or evaluation and discusses the following steps that an organization might take to develop and implement a program: getting ready; orientation and team building; research/evaluation design; skill development; data collection and documentation; data analysis; final report, presentation, and celebration; and developing and implementing an action plan. Part 2 also includes sample activities and "snapshots" of past Youth in Focus-coached projects. Appendices provide information on other resources and examples of youth led research and evaluation project budgets and timelines. (MN)

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YOUTH REP STEP BY STEP

AN INTRODUCTION TO YOUTH-LED RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

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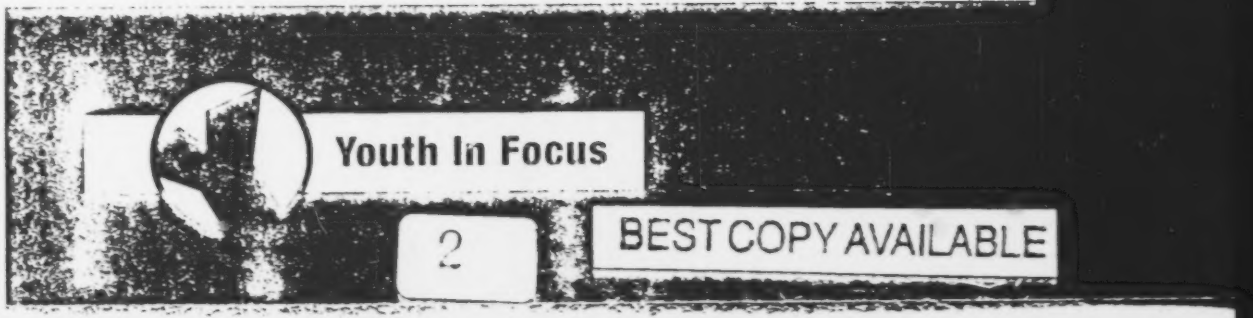

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What is Youth In Focus?

Youth In Focus is a non-profit intermediary organization that fosters the development of youth, organizations, and communities by supporting Youth-led Research, Evaluation, and Planning (Youth REP). Our work is based on the belief that youth can effectively partner with adults to address social and institutional challenges and that these partnerships are crucial to achieving just, democratic, and sustainable social change.

Youth REP gets youth in focus: youth enhance their capacity to be leaders within associations and communities; adults learn to collaborate with youth in institutional and community development; institutions focus on youth outcomes and restructure to sustain effective youth leadership. When youth are in focus, the concerns and experience of youth take center stage in the planning and assessment of the programs, policies, and neighborhoods that affect their lives.

Youth In Focus originated as a youth-led project. Founded in 1989 as Cultural Survival's Intercultural Oral History Project, the organization worked in Nepal and India to develop a youth-led action research curriculum that fostered language learning, inter-generational communication, and political and historical awareness. We became Community LORE (a project of the Tides Center) in 1993, to continue our work with San Francisco Bay Area youth. In 1998, we synthesized nine years of experience with Youth REP into the Stepping Stones training package, which includes youth training, facilitator coaching, and organizational capacity building. In 2000, we changed our name to Youth In Focus. Over the years we have supported hundreds of educators and youth workers in the development of programs serving thousands of young people throughout northern California.

YOUTH REP STEP BY STEP

AN INTRODUCTION TO YOUTH-LED RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

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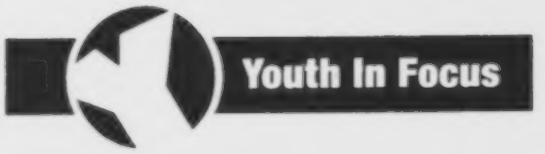

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The three co-founders of Youth In Focus — Nancy Erbstein, Jonathan London, and Kristen Zimmerman — developed the Youth REP Stepping Stones resource materials and coaching and training processes. The Youth REP Stepping Stones Process was developed with the critical input of many supporters, including the following members of the Youth REP Curriculum Advisory Group and the Youth REP Training Process Advisory Group. All of them contributed their time, energy, talents, and insights into making Youth REP a powerful tool for youth and their communities.

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Hayley Bryant
David Chambliss
Frances Contreras
Stacey Daraio
Kaira Espinoza
Shawn Ginwright
David Higuera
Julie Iny
Taj James
Claudia Jasin
Annie Johnston
Genevieve Lau
Carilee Pang
Cheryl Taylor

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Thank you all.

Jonathan London, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Youth In Focus

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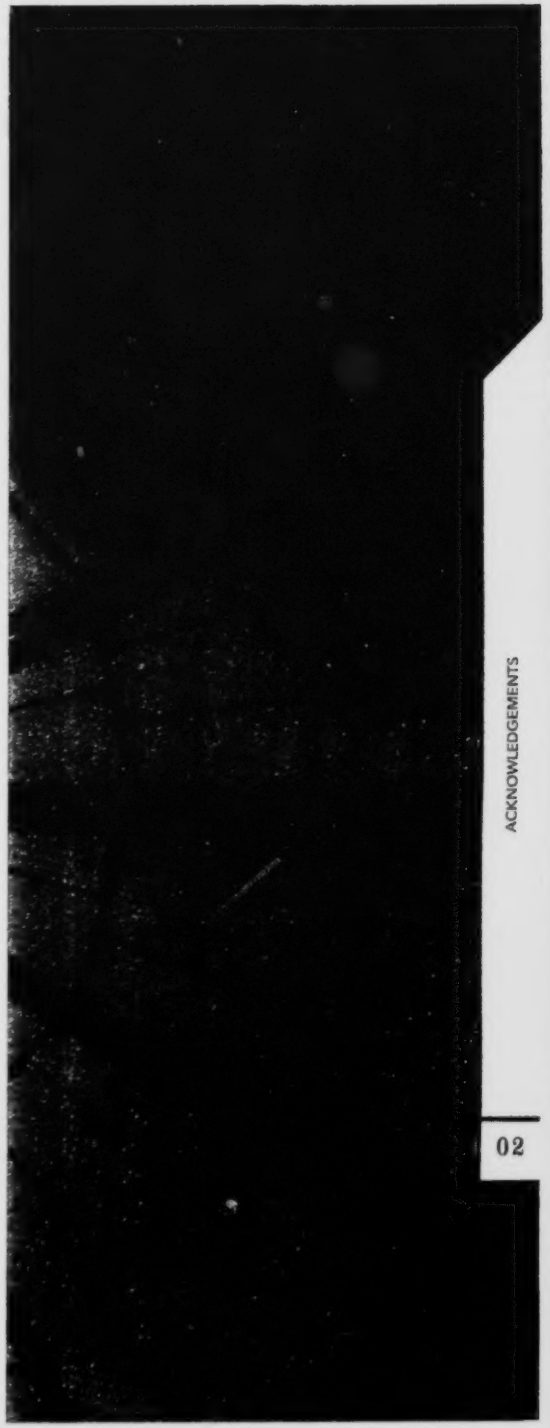

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INTRODUCTION

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WHAT IS THIS GUIDE?

Youth In Focus believes that a truly just and democratic society relies on and supports the full participation of all its citizens in decision-making. It involves stakeholders — from young people to elders — in community and institutional development. It integrates youth, institutional, and community development into a broader process of social transformation. And this process is based on a commitment to equity, justice, and sustainability.

But how do you take a vision for youth empowerment and social justice and use it to strengthen the organizations and communities you have right now? This guide is designed to help those who wish to try.

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WHAT IS THIS GUIDE? (cont)

For over a decade, Youth In Focus has worked directly with hundreds of young people, communities, and organizations to implement youth-led research, evaluation, and planning (Youth REP) targeting a broad range of issues (e.g. enhancing public health, strengthening after-school programs, reforming the juvenile justice system, and improving public schools).

Youth REP Step by Step provides a detailed introduction to youth-led research and evaluation by focusing on what projects tend to have in common. Youth-led Planning is presented in a more limited way. Readers will find descriptions and profiles of youth-led projects; an overview of youth-led research and evaluation project stages (the Stepping Stones); and critical insights from project facilitators, youth evaluators, and community members. Anyone who is in the process of deciding whether to take on youth-led research and evaluation, preparing to move ahead, or already underway will find useful information here.

This guide does not present a prescribed set of activities and lesson plans. Over time we have recognized that no single curriculum serves all Youth REP projects — the type of organization, community context, youth capacities and interests, and project goals play a big role in framing the Youth REP process at each site. Youth In Focus works with groups to assess their needs and adapt our Youth REP framework and activity plans to them.

The guide is divided into an introduction, two main chapters, and a set of appendices. The introduction provides background on youth-led research and evaluation. Part I offers guidance on assessing organizational readiness to take on youth-led projects and contains advice from youth evaluators and their host organizations. Part II provides a detailed overview of the Stepping Stones process for youth-led research or evaluation, and a sense of the actual steps that an organization might take to develop and carry out a program. This section also includes some sample activities and "snapshots" of past Youth In Focus-coached projects. Appendices provide information on other resources and examples of youth-led research and evaluation project budgets and timelines.

WHAT IS YOUTH-LED RESEARCH, EVALUATION AND PLANNING (YOUTH REP)?

The crux of Youth REP is simple. In Youth REP projects, young people play lead roles in identifying information that could serve to change or initiate a program, organization, community initiative, organizing campaign, or policy that affects them and their peers. They then frame questions, design and use methods to collect data, analyze the information, make recommendations, and work with others to follow through to action. Often an initial project becomes the foundation of youth leadership in ongoing cycles of needs assessment, planning, action, and evaluation.

But Youth REP is much more than the sum of these activities. Youth REP is about supporting the growth and change of youth-serving organizations and communities in ways that include and empower young people. Youth REP fosters development and civic engagement by giving youth a meaningful chance to represent their own needs and interests; to collaborate with adults to improve conditions for themselves and others; and to develop valuable research, writing, analytical, and presentation skills. This type of youth involvement strengthens youth-serving organizations and communities by bringing in the insights, creativity, leadership, and energy of their youth constituents.

Youth REP is fundamentally about sharing power and democratizing knowledge-production and decision-making. By including young people as effective partners, Youth REP advances participatory models of institutional and community improvement; empowers young people to become critical thinkers, effective leaders, and active change agents in their organizations and communities; and demonstrates and builds on the tremendous capacity of young people.

Youth REP requires organizations, community leaders, and youth participants to ask critical questions about how local institutions operate and how they can be improved. Who makes decisions for whom? Who decides what's best? Who holds the power to make changes? These and other questions serve as reminders of how power and information are distributed and used, often unwittingly, in ways that limit and leave out the voices of those people most affected by institutional and community planning and decision-making. Through actively engaging these questions, Youth REP supports a vision of a more democratic and just society that listens to and includes its least powerful members.

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF YOUTH-LED RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND PLANNING

Youth In Focus and its Youth REP model grew out of the action and reflection of its three young adult co-founders. At the same time, the ideas that underlie and inspire Youth REP can be traced to several different fields, including popular education, participatory research, and youth development.

The fields of popular education and participatory action research (PAR) support the notion that all people, particularly the least powerful, can and should play a role in the decision-making, planning, and change processes that shape their lives. Popular education, an approach to collective learning that begins with the lived experiences of participants and results in action that reflects those experiences, offers a legacy of empowering communities all over the world to understand and solve their problems (Freire 1973; Hurst 1995). Participatory action research reframes the typical dichotomies between researcher and subject and between research and action (Hall 1992; Vio Grossi 1981). It casts research and evaluation as democratic processes working to empower participants — especially the most marginalized — to act as informed agents in improving their lives and effecting social change. As part of this progressive tradition, youth-led research and evaluation re-positions youth from passive subjects of inquiry to arbiters of what topics and questions are to be studied, and to what (and whose) benefit this knowledge will be directed. Youth-led research and evaluation seeks both to generate knowledge useful for the well-being of youth and to provide opportunities for empowerment of the participants (Institute for Community Research 2002).

Empowerment evaluation, based in the fields of participatory action research and popular education, forms another part of the framework for Youth REP (Fetterman 2000; Wallerstein 1988, 1999, and 2000). Like collaborative inquiry and other constituency-based models of assessment and change, empowerment evaluation differs from traditional and external evaluation models, centering instead on an insider's view of an organization and on ways to strengthen the organization by building the skills of those closest to it.

Participatory planning has contributed to Youth REP the notion of planning of, by, and for the people. This concept has been examined in scholarship ranging from Davidoff's (1965) advocacy planning in

the politicized urban atmosphere of the 1960s, to Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (1979), to Hester's participatory landscape and neighborhood design processes (1990), to the specialized field of children's educational and play environments (Moore 1986; R. Harte 1997).

Theories of youth development, youth participation, and youth organizing challenge conventional views of youth as victims or threats and instead offer new conceptualizations of youth as resources, assets, and community-builders (Kurth-Schai 1988; Checkoway and Finn 1992; Kretzmann and McKnight 1993; McLaughlin, Irby, and Langman 1993; Pittman and Zeldin 1993; Gambone and Connell 1999; Zeldin and Camino 1999). These ideas embrace the capacity and potential of youth to be critical and active members of their society while recognizing the need for youth supports. Youth REP also springs from the social justice model of youth development, a model which recognizes that many young people's lives and communities are actively shaped by historical and institutional oppression and seeks to build the capacity of youth (particularly those marginalized by race, economics, language, culture, sexual orientation, etc.) first to critically understand oppression and then to become active change agents in overcoming it. This understanding and action takes place on a personal, community, and global level in order to promote the change needed for social welfare and the common good (Ginwright and Cammarota 2002.) Youth REP is further grounded in a tradition of youth organizing which assumes that young people can educate, mobilize, and act as a group on behalf of their interests (James and McGilicuddy 2001).

Finally, there is a body of writing specifically focused on youth-led research and evaluation that is informing and has been informed by Youth REP (Sabo, forthcoming; Zimmerman and Erbstein 1999; London 2000; Erbstein, London, and Zimmerman, forthcoming; Carver and London 2002; Smith 2001; Horsch et al. 2002; Checkoway and Goodyear, forthcoming). Please see Appendix A for a list of these and other references.

Youth REP embodies all of these theories in different ways. It provides a vehicle for young people's personal development, and at the same time it promotes a participatory model of community and organizational development. Like popular education and participatory action research, Youth REP is a collective learning process that facilitates young people applying their lived experiences to community and organizational change processes. Youth REP helps to foster self-determination in communities, particularly marginalized communities, by providing tools that enable youth and other community members to function as key leaders in vital decision-making. Like empowerment evaluation, Youth REP focuses on and provides a model for strengthening organizations and communities through the experiences and wisdom of constituents. Like social justice youth development and youth organizing, Youth REP helps young people and their allies grapple with pressing social issues and formulate well-researched strategies for action.

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GET READY, GET SET...
ASSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS

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It is vital to assess the readiness of your organization, network, or community to take on and succeed in Youth REP. Youth-led research and evaluation involves empowering youth and making lasting and organizational community changes. The organization and the community play as significant a role as that of the youth themselves. Just as the young people must prepare and train to conduct an evaluation or research project, the organization and the community also must commit and be prepared to support, facilitate, and follow through on the project.

The following section provides three tools to help assess readiness to engage in youth-led research and evaluation: a continuum of youth participation in research and evaluation, an overview of key ingredients of past successes, and a set of recommendations from project participants. The recommendations emerged from a series of discussions, interviews, and questionnaires conducted by Youth In Focus. We asked a host of questions about their experiences with youth-led undertakings, including what major struggles they faced, what benefits the project offered, and what recommendations they would have for organizations hoping to embark on a similar path.

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WHY DO IT?
OUTCOMES OF YOUTH-LED RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Why put the energy and resources into youth-led evaluation or research? Consider the following outcomes experienced by several organizations that have recently completed their own Youth REP projects.

1 Facilitates Good Youth Development

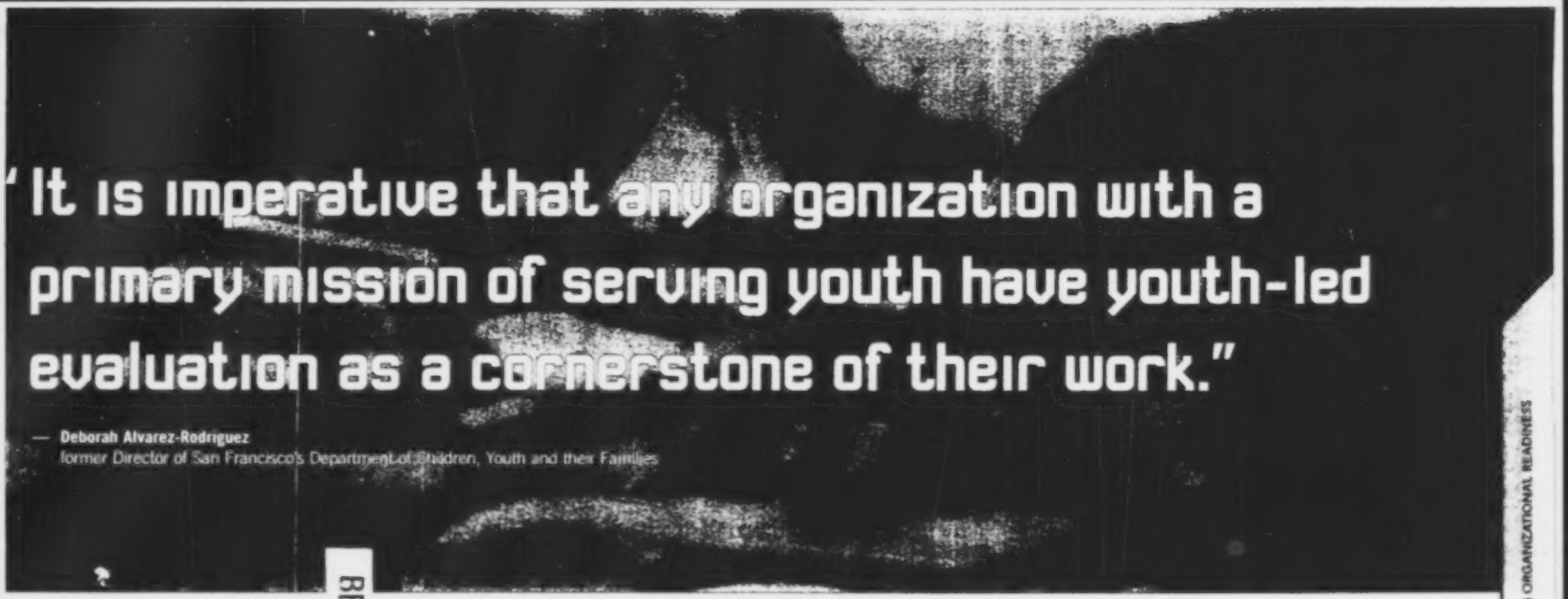
- Promotes leadership development
- Encourages community- and relationship-building
- Facilitates skill-building and real-world/experiential learning
- Provides youth with tools to address issues that impact their lives

2 Strengthens Organizational Development and Capacity-Building

- Strengthens planning, decision-making, and resource-allocation processes
- Enhances fundraising efforts
- Strengthens staff development and capacity-building
- Facilitates youth ownership and buy-in
- Encourages community- and relationship-building
- Helps organizations address the needs of culturally diverse youth and communities
- Promotes a youth-friendly, democratic, and responsive organizational culture

3 Catalyzes Youth Involvement in Community Change

- Provides youth with opportunities, skills, and information to make real change
- Focuses community change efforts by integrating issues most important to young people
- Strengthens strategies informed by the unique, creative insights of young people



"It is imperative that any organization with a primary mission of serving youth have youth-led evaluation as a cornerstone of their work."

— **Deborah Alvarez-Rodriguez**
former Director of San Francisco's Department of Children, Youth and their Families

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"It's a very special thing to get to do...It's fun, you help out, and we learned a lot."

— **Dionne and Chinda**
E-Squad Youth Evaluators,
St. John's Educational Threshholds Center

"The skills that young people learn...are very valuable. They learn organizing, facilitating, and data collection skills...practical skills that can be used in everyday life."

— **Thea Idelfonzo**
Facilitator, Making a Difference,
Jamestown Community Center

"[Youth-led] needs assessments...add great strength to our funding requests...and program design...[it has helped us] to make our programs sustainable."

— **Susie Kocher**
Independent Evaluator and Staff
Facilitator, Plumas County

"The youth found a lot of wonderful information that the adult evaluators were not able to pull together..."

— **Laurene Dominguez**
Director, Youth IMPACT

A CONTINUUM OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

The continuum to the right provides examples that illustrate low to high levels of youth participation in research and evaluation. Used as part of a training, or simply as a source of reflection, the continuum helps organizations and communities assess where they are, identify where they want to go, and plan how they will get there. In general Youth In Focus advocates for and supports high levels of youth participation. However, we recognize that different settings call for different levels of youth involvement. To determine what makes most sense, consider the nature of the organization or initiative, the goals of the research/evaluation, required outcomes, youth interests, and available resources.

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HIGH LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Highest involvement	Youth-led research/ evaluation is institutionalized as part of the organizational planning cycle. Experienced youth researchers/ evaluators act as peer trainers. Youth are paid staff.
High involvement	Youth-led participation in the entire process. Youth roles include research design, data collection, data analysis, reporting findings and recommendations, and implementing change.
Medium-high	Youth design and administer research instruments. Example: Youth design and give out a survey to their peers. Adults analyze the result, develop findings, and implement changes.
Medium-low involvement	Youth input on process. Example: Youth give adults feedback on adult-designed survey questions.
Low involvement	Youth as data collectors. Example: youth collect data for adult evaluators with an adult-designed survey.
Little youth involvement	Information is collected from youth. Example Youth take an adult-designed survey.

NO/LOW LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

"Stress the importance of collaborating with others to make the project possible..."

If there is one organizational piece that isn't as strong yet, like being able to provide lots of resources or extra funds...it is possible to run the project. Someone might read all those requirements [the "Key Ingredients"] and think "well, we don't have the technical expertise or we don't have a nice space" and then think that they can't do it all...Stress the importance of collaborating with others to make the project possible...From my experience, a lot of this was overwhelming at the beginning. I was even a bit scared that we wouldn't be able to pull it off because we weren't a typical organization, nor is there very much staff capacity [only me]. However, we found ways to pull together resources and were able to pull off a lot in a short time frame.

— **Ly Nguyen**
Executive Director, Oasis and
Facilitator, SOYAC (Serving Our Youth and Community)

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KEY INGREDIENTS

To support youth-led evaluation and research, the sponsoring organization must have — or be willing to develop — the cultural and structural conditions, the community knowledge and community support, and the resources that will support and sustain youth involvement in needs assessment, evaluation, decision-making, and planning processes. Following are some ingredients that have been key to the success of Youth REP.

1 Organizational Culture

(a shared set of values, beliefs, expectations, and ways of communicating and behaving)

- Values and actively respects the insights, experience, and capacities of youth
- Committed to youth and community development processes that build on strengths while recognizing and addressing challenges
- Strong relationships and communication between staff and youth and between staff and community
- Values multiple forms of diversity (ethnic, cultural, linguistic, ability, etc.) as assets
- Broad support for youth as active leaders and participants in research, evaluation, and planning processes

2 Organizational Structures

- Decision-making processes that include youth and other community constituents
- Channels of communication that are accessible to and actively used by youth and other community constituents
- Strong communication between organization staff and leadership
- Organizational stability (i.e. solid finances and low staff turnover)
- Staff-youth ratios that allow for personalized, supportive facilitation for the youth team
- Existing systems for conducting needs assessments and evaluations, or a strong intent to establish such systems
- High and fair expectations of staff and youth/community constituents
- Capacity to allocate or raise funds required to support Youth REP and related activities

3 Knowledge of the Community Context

- Strong knowledge of the local social, political, and economic history and context
- Cultural competency
- Strong relationships, both formal and informal, with local leaders
- Ability to identify potential community resources and allies as well as challenges

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4 Resources

- **Youth Capacity**
  Youth who are willing and able to commit to a sustained, challenging, and highly rewarding project.

- **Youth Compensation**
  A paid stipend or salary and/or movie, concert or amusement park tickets, gift certificates, outings, educational scholarships that fairly compensate the youth time and work.

- **Staff Time**
  Executive leader(s) to oversee the project and integrate efforts into the larger organizational planning; staff member(s) to develop the project and serve as lead adult or youth facilitator(s) during all project stages (typically at least ten to twenty hours per week depending on the project scope); and additional staff member(s) to serve as back-up facilitators and troubleshooting support for the primary facilitator(s).

- **Staff Capacity**
  An excellent, highly organized youth worker who can serve as facilitator, advisor, teacher, resource person, and cheerleader for the youth research and evaluation team.

- **Equipment**
  Computer(s) with appropriate software, photocopier for general use, and special equipment for specific project needs (i.e., video camera, tape recorder).

- **Materials and Supplies**
  General office supplies (such as paper, markers, disks, ink cartridges), special materials for specific project needs (such as video/audio cassettes, research software), snacks for meetings and working sessions.

- **Space**
  A comfortable, private, and convenient space in which to hold regular meetings and conduct research.

- **Transportation**
  Youth may need transportation to attend meetings and trainings, collect data, present their findings, and/or go on special outings.

- **Final Product Funds**
  Funding to cover the cost of producing, disseminating, and celebrating a final product.

- **Training Resources**
  Training and technical assistance to guide the facilitator and/or youth team through more difficult and unfamiliar aspects of the process (e.g., complex data analysis, video editing, GIS).

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Consider whether these ingredients are in place, in the works, or within easy reach. Jumping into a youth-led project too quickly can lead to disempowering and counterproductive results for organizations, youth, and communities. However, with the appropriate preparation, youth-led research, evaluation, and planning can catalyze positive youth, institutional, and community development.

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IF WE ONLY KNEW: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FOR YOUTH-LED RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

1 Starting Up

How do you know if you and your group are ready to start a youth-led project? Consider the following issues before you decide to take the plunge.

- **Learn more about youth-led evaluation and research**

  Talk to people who have done youth-led research and evaluation projects before. Collect samples of youth-led research and evaluation products. Educate your staff and leadership about the process and how it fits into your organization's development.

- **Assess your readiness**

  Take a good honest look at how prepared your organization is to support youth-led research and evaluation before you start.

"They should know a lot about [youth research and evaluation] first...talk to someone who did it...and get advice from them. They should read our book! It has everything you need...how we did it, why we did it."

— **Dionne and Chinda**
E-Squad Youth Evaluators
St. John's Educational Thresholds Center

"Consult with colleagues and youth leaders. Make sure you have enough money and other resources. Be willing to change your ideas and respond to the unexpected. Then just do it."

— **Deborah Alvarez-Rodriguez**
former Director of San Francisco's Department of Children, Youth and their Families

"We felt like it fit really closely with our philosophy...of putting youth in the lead and supporting them building their leadership in the organization."

— **Kathy Phillips**
Executive Director, St. John's Educational Thresholds Center

Clarify your expectations and goals

Youth-led research and evaluation is a partnership between the young people and the leadership and staff of your organization. It is essential that the expectations and needs of both the youth evaluators and the organization be crystal clear at the beginning of the project. To start, determine the top priority for your organization:

- To promote youth leadership and empowerment
- To produce a final product that meets rigorous evaluation and research standards
- To take action and make community or organizational change, or
- Some combination of the above.

Outline the information and products that the organization absolutely needs from the process and define where the youth team has authority. If you have project partners, clarify the expectations of each partner.

▪ Develop the right project structure

What structure will your project need? Some organizations have successfully integrated projects into existing youth leadership or organizing groups, but many have found that they need to create an entirely new program devoted to the concept. Before you start, define the roles that people will play, be they project facilitator, director, or support staff, to name just a few. Create and maintain an effective communication system between youth team, staff and executive leadership.

"Don't let the adults do all the work or serve as the experts. The youth must be integrated into every facet of design and implementation ...Work with the youth evaluators as expert consultants who are responsible for delivering a high quality product and service within a time frame and budget."

— **Deborah Alvarez-Rodriguez**
former Director of San Francisco's Department of Children, Youth and their Families

"I would have included more background on...the program—the grant itself, possibilities within it, parameters. I would emphasize that [this isn't] "anything you guys want," but we're working in the context of this particular program and we can expand it and strengthen it based on your needs and desires."

— **Dorette English**
former Executive Director, Roundhouse Council Indian Education Center

"Initially we thought that we could make this happen through our existing youth leadership programming with the support of our program committee. What we realized is that we were creating a new youth leadership program."

— **Kathy Phillips**
Executive Director, St. John's Educational Thresholds Center

Leadership needs to take a hard and realistic look at resources, both in terms of finances and in terms of time that [the staff has] to devote to such a project.... It's important that we value this work equally with other evaluations and planning processes that the organization is doing."

— **Claudia Jasin**
Co-Director, Jamestown Community Center

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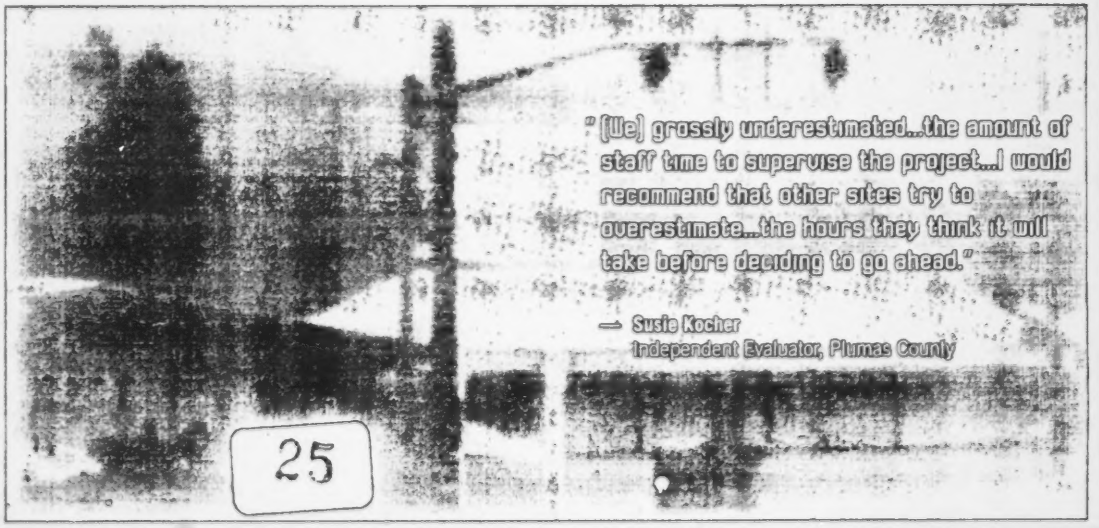
IF WE ONLY KNEW (cont)

2 Resources

- **Allocate time**

By far, the most critical and underestimated resource for a successful youth-led project is time. Staff, youth evaluators, and leadership all emphasized that it took longer to do a youth-led research and evaluation project than they expected. On average, they recommended a commitment of ten to twenty hours per week for the staff coordinator of a basic, single-organization project, and for youth evaluators, a minimum of six to ten hours per week. Timelines for a basic project generally run four to six months. Stepping Stones that often needed more time were the orientation (understanding the project context), data input and analysis, and final product production. For project deadlines (such as presentations at board meetings) leave a cushion time of three to four weeks from when you expect the team to finish their project.


"[We] grossly underestimated...the amount of staff time to supervise the project...I would recommend that other sites try to overestimate...the hours they think it will take before deciding to go ahead."
— Susie Kocher
Independent Evaluator, Plumas County
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Secure technical resources and support

Anticipate the technical resources your team will need and make arrangements for staff, volunteers, or consultants to assist the team. Research design, data management, and data analysis are areas where most teams need technical support. Find people who can review the team's instruments, help to design a database and enter data, and further the team's analysis process. Identify the technical help the team will need for their final product.

Secure funding and material resources

See Appendix B for a list of typical funding and material resource needs. Youth REP is resource intensive, but it need not cost a lot of additional money. Organizations have come up with creative ways to limit program expenses by using donated meeting space in local schools and community centers, soliciting donated program materials, and sharing expenses with other related programs in the organization. For the remainder, use the "Why Do It?" section as the basis of grant proposals to foundations, public agencies, local businesses and other funding sources.

Secure appropriate meeting space

All projects need meeting space—a place where youth evaluators can talk and do their work privately, without interruptions. Make the effort to find and secure space for the team.

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"You can have all the money...and time in the world, but if you don't have a place where (youth evaluators) can sit and do their work and talk privately, it's not going to be a good process."

— **Claudia Jasin**
Co-Director, Jamestown Community Center

"Sometimes we didn't know where everyone was at and that made (meeting time) kind of hectic, confusing, and late."

— **Dionne and Chinda**
E-Squad, St. John's Educational Threshold Center

IF WE ONLY KNEW (cont)

Staffing the Project

▫ Hire appropriate staff

Above all, good project coordinators need to know how to work with young people and how to structure and organize a program. They need to have respect and high expectations for what young people can accomplish and should have experience in youth development, youth organizing, and research and evaluation. They need to know how to teach, facilitate, and develop the team's political and social consciousness. They need to be resourceful. Most likely you will not find one person who has all of these skills, so it is critical that the organization assemble a team of people to support the main facilitator.

▫ Provide staff training and support

Create a structure that includes direct support from top-level management, training, and coaching. Training should include technical background on research and evaluation, information on how to design and facilitate the project, and preparation for working with youth, youth development, and youth organizing. Make sure you know how you will handle staff absences. Determine who will fill in when the main facilitator is gone. Staff may need support from executive leaders to allocate appropriate time to the project.

" You can have the most amazing evaluation person who knows everything about evaluation, but if they don't connect with those kids, good luck! To really develop a youth-led evaluation that's truly youth-led you have to have a team...[people who are] strong youth workers that are connected to the community, and people that have a strong understanding of evaluation."

— **Laurene Dominguez**
Director, Youth IMPACT

" Most evaluators, even those that evaluate youth programs, have rarely worked with youth directly as peer experts and researchers. [There is a] big divide between youth development experts and research experts...I would require that all consultants demonstrate their experience working directly with youth."

— **Deborah Alvarez-Rodriguez**
former Director of San Francisco's Department of Children, Youth and their Families

" I've had a great experience. Besides finding useful information for Jamestown, I've been able to build strong relationships with the youth that I worked with...This strong bond depends on the facilitator, because s/he sets the tone for the environment."

— **Thea Ideifonzo**
Facilitator, Making a Difference
Jamestown Community Center

4 Train youth researchers and evaluators

- **Recruit the right team**

  Involve youth in recruiting and hiring the team. Youth recruiters often reach other young people much more effectively. Select young people who understand and are ready to commit to the project. Develop a team that reflects the youth represented in the project and that is diverse in background—ethnic, gender, economic—and skills.

- **Set high goals**

  Set high expectations for the youth research or evaluation team and back the expectations up with quality training throughout the project. Pay special attention to developing the project context, research design, and analysis. Clearly outline the organizational needs and limitations and the social/political issues, networks, and history framing the project. Help team members sharpen their questions and instrument design and seek the deeper meaning of their data, going beyond a simple analysis.

- **Build partnership between the team and the organizational leadership**

  Constructive feedback strengthens the team's research design, data collection process, analysis and final product. Set up a feedback loop with the top-level management of your organization, and with people who can provide good technical feedback to the team. This will help to cultivate a partnership between the youth team and the organization's leadership.

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"We hired two youth we had worked with in the past...and gave them the task of recruiting youth...This included designing the job description, developing recruitment fliers, and participating [in] the actual interviews and selections. We also deferred to their recommendations on who to hire."

— Janet Canty
Director, Portola Healthy Start

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IF WE ONLY KNEW (cont)

- **Sustain youth involvement**

  Use research and evaluation for real change. The most common reason why youth get involved and want to stay involved with research and evaluation is to make positive change in their communities. Compensate youth with concrete rewards. Youth compensation can be as varied as monetary compensation, school credit, gifts or products like tickets, travel, etc. Balance work with fun. Research and evaluation is challenging work. Team members need opportunities to have fun with the work and with each other. Provide support. Take on some of the more labor-intensive tedious work, such as data entry or video editing when needed.

  This will help focus the team on more critical tasks, especially in projects that are tight on time. Also provide logistical support, such as traveling or scheduling site visits, when necessary. Invest in team building. When youth evaluators/researchers feel a strong bond with each other and the project, they stick through the hard times. Prepare for turnover. Plan for how to support the team if people need to drop out. Engage young people as mentors. Experienced youth who have worked on research/evaluation projects are excellent mentors. Create roles for them in recruitment, training, and team building.

5 Managing the Project

- **Carefully consider timing**

  Schedule the project to complement other yearly or seasonal cycles in the organization and young people's lives, such as school. Leave cushion time between when you anticipate the team will actually finish their work and final deadlines, such as a board presentation.

Have a lot of fun. Always have play...and icebreakers. You don't have to be hekka strict...be yourself, but be professional too."

— **Dionne and Chinda**
E-Squad Youth Evaluators
St. John's Educational Thresholds Center

Paying youth [evaluators] helps show them respect, it's actually treating them more like adults. In an area with high poverty like ours, paying youth can focus their attention on the importance of the skills they are learning and help them develop career potential."

— **Susie Kocher**
Independent Evaluator, Plumas County

I know that [youth evaluation and research] requires extreme commitment...Not all my friends are up to that. But if you hang in there you will see your effort pay off."

— **Lily**
Youth IMPACT

By the end of the program the youth felt...like it was a family...That's what kept them in that program in the summer when they were working 40 hours a week. They felt committed to each other and proud about their work."

— **Laurene Dominguez**
Director, Youth IMPACT

Create a good feedback system on the materials before they go out. Not to be critical, but for leadership to be a part of the process, like "we really need to know this, can we include a question on this?"

— **Dorette English**
former Executive Director, Roundhouse Council

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- **Emphasize communication and coordination**

  Create the time and structure for regular communication between the project coordinator and organizational director, between the youth team and leadership, and between other project partners. Use this time for updates, feedback, coordination, project monitoring and troubleshooting, and to start implementing the team's findings.

- **Back up your work!**

  Always have another copy of the team's work stored in a safe place in case the data is lost or the computer crashes. One project lost its digital data when a team member's backpack with the project disks was stolen on the bus!

5 Keeping it Real

- **Plan for follow-through and implementation**

  The ability to make change and improve their world is why youth and adults alike invest time, effort, and care into these projects. From the start, think about how you will apply the findings of the projects. How can they be used to make change in the organization and the community? Distribute findings to organizations/communities who can use the information. If team members are not directly involved in the implementation of the findings, report back any changes you make to the team.

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We had a lot of meetings [with leadership of the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and their Families, or DCYF] and the youth throughout the process. And I could totally see the change in terms of [the leadership's] reaction to the project and their commitment to it...As a result, DCYF is continuing to develop the [youth evaluation] program for two more years."

— **Laurene Dominguez**
Director, Youth IMPACT

Once we finished the evaluation [the director] started telling us what changes she made and that is when I was able to grasp the actual effect our evaluation had."

— **Lily**
Youth IMPACT

The Plumas Youth Network was created [to] provide a forum for youth to [be] involved locally and regionally in...youth leadership efforts."

— **Janet Canty**
Director, Portola Healthy Start

I knew that we would do a book... that was a minimum. I was hopeful that more community action would happen...that there would be more work in the community."

— **Laurene Dominguez**
Director, Youth IMPACT

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MAKING IT STICK: INSTITUTIONALIZING YOUTH-LED RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Define the vision and goals of youth-led evaluation in your organization

Clarify your broader vision for youth leadership and participation in the organization, your plan for youth-led research and evaluation's role in that vision, and your goals for doing youth-led research and evaluation on an ongoing basis.

Cultivate a supportive organizational culture

Commit to ongoing training and dialogue for adults and youth in your organization. Cultivate leaders who appreciate the value of youth-led initiatives and can move the organization forward. Monitor your progress and learn from your efforts.

"[Organizations] must first of all be open-minded and non-ageist. If they recognize that the youth...are able to do whatever they set their mind to, then...everyone...will be able to get over the tough spots."

— **Lily**
Youth IMPACT

"Somewhere in the organization there needs to be a coach...[Someone] to support, cheerlead, train."

— **Claudia Jasin**
Co-Director, Jamestown Community Center

Develop structures to support youth-led evaluation and research

Integrate youth-led research and evaluation into other organizational cycles and structures. Create a "home" for the work, whether as a new youth leadership program or group, or integrated into an existing one. Support institutional memory through building staff capacity to do the work, training leadership, documenting your process, and engaging former youth evaluators and researchers as trainers and mentors.

"With cyclical funding...you can really get youth involved in planning and ongoing development...This is something we could do every year."

— **Dorette English**
former Director, Roundhouse Council

"[Youth evaluation] is part and parcel of our overall approach to evaluation and...to youth leadership."

— **Kathy Phillips**
Executive Director, St. John's Educational Thresholds Center

Commit resources

Integrate youth-led research, evaluation and planning into your overall fundraising strategy. Commit regular technical resources, staff, equipment, and space to the process.

"We learned a lot, that's why we can help [the new group of youth evaluators]. When they don't know...something we can help them out."

— **Dionne and Chinda**
E-Squad Youth Evaluators
St. John's Educational Thresholds Center

Think big! (community impact)

Take the time to learn from and follow through on findings. Think beyond your organization about how the findings might be used to promote community development, organizing and advocacy. Help youth team members connect with other allies and develop structures for them to take their work to the next level of planning and community change.

"...It can make a huge impact on an entire community. For us, the process impacted SOYAC and our members along with the community. One of the community impacts is that it gives a reason for organizations to lend their resources to a youth-led process. In a sense, it is safe to say that the Youth REP process can be completed not only by an organization but also by a neighborhood network..."

— **Ly Nguyen**
Executive Director, Oasis and Facilitator, SOYAC

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GO! YOUTH-LED RESEARCH AND EVALUATION STEPPING STONES

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So how do youth-led research and evaluation actually work? Part 2 describes the eight Stepping Stones that form the foundation of Youth In Focus training and coaching. Each Stepping Stone reflects a basic stage of a youth-led research or evaluation project. Together they build on each other to create the entire process. Sample activities and real examples from youth-led projects provide a sense of how it all looks on the ground.

While the scope of this guide does not allow for detailed activity descriptions, individual lesson plans, and extensive background information on research and evaluation methods, a careful reading of this section will provide lots of information that would be useful to facilitators of youth-led research or evaluation projects. A quick reading of this section will provide a clear overview of the process.

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THE STEPPING STONES

1 GETTING READY

- Plan the project
- Secure staff and the youth team
- Gather project resources

2 ORIENTATION AND TEAM-BUILDING

- Introduction to research and evaluation
- Team-building
- Organizational and community mapping
- Understanding community context

3 RESEARCH/ EVALUATION DESIGN

- Define learning and process goals
- Develop research questions
- Define the Final Product
- Design Methods, Tools, and Documentation System
- Select a Sample
- Develop an Action Plan

4 SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- Learn basic research skills
- Develop research specialized skills
- Practice research/evaluation

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DATA COLLECTION AND DOCUMENTATION

- Organize a support system
- Confirm logistics
- Collect data
- Document and organize data

6

DATA ANALYSIS

- First impressions
- Organize Data
- Analyze data
- Develop Findings and Recommendations
- Reflection on the bigger picture

7

FINAL REPORT, PRESENTATION AND CELEBRATION

- Complete the final product(s)
- Create written report
- Organize presentations
- Celebrate!

8

NEXT STEPS

- Develop an action plan
- Develop and distribute a proposal
- Strategy meetings
- Action!
- Evaluate progress and results

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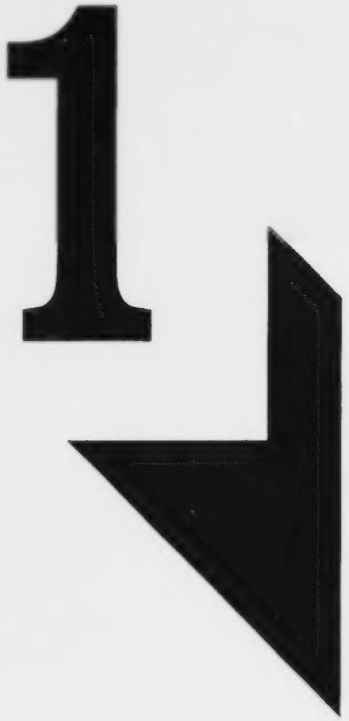

STEPPING STONE 1

GETTING READY

At this first Stepping Stone, the host organization prepares to support a youth-led research or evaluation project. This preliminary planning involves the executive leadership, staff, and board if appropriate. Key activities include creating an organizational plan that establishes project parameters, staffing up, and identifying and gathering necessary resources.

ACTIVITY SECTIONS

1 Develop an Organizational Plan for the Project

An initial meeting among organizational staff, leaders, and other appropriate constituents (e.g., existing youth leaders, parents, funders) is held to establish the organization's goals and parameters for the project. At Stepping Stone 2 (Orientation), the youth research/evaluation team will design the specific project goals and methods through a similar planning process.

2 Secure Staff

Youth teams benefit from staff with strong youth leadership development skills, appropriate cultural competance, and knowledge of research, evaluation, and the local community. At least one facilitator must guide the youth team through the entire process. If possible, one or more staff persons should be designated to provide back-up for the primary facilitator. Co-facilitation also works well, as long as there is clear and continuous communication and collaboration. Executive staff must also dedicate time to the project to stay informed and connected with the team's work and to consider how the youth-led evaluation process can become an ongoing part of the organization's operations.

3 Hire the Youth Evaluation Team

Recruitment emphasizes building a team that reflects the youth constituency it will be trying to reach and that embodies key skills needed to complete the work (i.e. multiple languages, artistic talent, public speaking skills). The youth need not be experts in research or evaluation or even familiar with the process. They need not be the high academic achievers or the obvious leaders within the organization or community. However, they must demonstrate a commitment to the entire process, from team-building to the development of findings and next steps, and a relationship to the organization or issue they are investigating. Youth-led research and evaluation requires a stable and committed team of young people; describing the position as a job and offering compensation helps increase the level of interest among youth (many of whom want and need paying jobs) and decrease attrition.

4 Gather Other Necessary Resources

Resource needs vary according to the scope and goals of the particular project, but almost all projects require 1) staff and youth time; 2) meeting space; 3) basic materials (writing paper, pens, an easel, etc.) and equipment (access to a photo-copier, computer, overhead projector, etc.); 4) project-specific materials and equipment (audio or video-recording equipment and tapes, computer database program and/or other data analysis software, etc.); 5) training and technical assistance.

YOUTH IMPACT

San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and their Families

San Francisco, California

What makes a community-based organization feel trustworthy to youth? How well do city-funded CBOs serve youth? Those are the kinds of questions that drive Youth IMPACT, a project of the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and their Families (DCYF). Through comprehensive youth-led evaluations, Youth IMPACT gives young people a voice in how San Francisco invests resources for children and

youth. The findings of Youth IMPACT evaluations feed into the department's strategic planning, funding, and technical assistance processes. In 2000, Youth In Focus helped develop the pilot year of Youth IMPACT. In 2002, Youth In Focus assisted in training a local organization, Literacy for Environmental Justice (LEJ) to facilitate the next two year phase of Youth IMPACT for the city.

Youth In Focus prepared LEJ for the Youth IMPACT project through a series of information sessions to acquaint LEJ staff and leadership with the process of evaluation and the purposes and phases of a youth-led evaluation project. In one segment of the training, called "Around The Evaluation in 90 Minutes," LEJ staff received a "mission impossible" assignment to complete a full evaluation within the three-hour session. Through a series of activities, the participants went from developing an evaluation design to presenting their findings to a hypothetical board of directors. In doing so, the LEJ staff acquired a better understanding of evaluation and the challenges the youth team would face. The preparation helped LEJ think ahead about how to support the Youth IMPACT team and how the team's work would fit into a larger process of organizational change.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY

Introduction

Congratulations! You have embarked on a journey of evaluation. It will be challenging and (hopefully) fun, and will bring you to places you have never been. Here is your mission, if you choose to accept it: You have been asked by your organization's board of directors to develop and implement a facilities evaluation. Your task today is to evaluate the condition of this room. The results will be used to inform your organization's short- and long-term facilities management planning. The envelopes located at the stations around the room hold directions to guide you in your journey. Good luck.

Step 1: Getting Ready

Your team has ten minutes to answer the following questions: What is the overall purpose of this evaluation? Who is this evaluation serving? What do we and the board want to learn? What is our timeline? What resources do we have and what else do we need? Who else should we talk with to establish these parameters? (Because of the limited time available, this activity will serve as your Orientation and Team-Building Stepping Stone and you will now proceed directly to Research/Evaluation Design.)

AROUND THE EVALUATION IN 90 MINUTES

The following activity is designed to help organization leaders and staff understand the procedures and challenges of a research or evaluation project. At each step, participants receive an envelope with instructions. The group wraps up with a final discussion about lessons-learned and their relationship to project-planning. This activity can be adapted to reflect a research process and/or a community-focused project.

Step 2: Research/Evaluation Design
You will have fifteen minutes to develop your research design. Out of a range of possible data collection instruments (focus groups, observation, mapping, surveys), you will select surveys. Develop three or four questions for your survey that will help you meet your learning and evaluation goals. Create a sheet to document and tally your results.

Step 3: Data Collection
You will have ten minutes to collect your data. Designate two people to administer the survey. The other members will be the research subjects. (They will take the survey.)

Step 4: Data Analysis
You have ten minutes to analyze your data. What does this data tell you about your evaluation questions? (These are your findings). What does it not tell you? Create at least one table and one graph to represent your findings. Based on these findings, what actions do you suggest? (These are your recommendations.) Be explicit about how your data backs up your recommendations.

Step 5: Final Product
You have ten minutes to create a final product for your evaluation. Who is your audience? What points do you want to highlight, what do they need to know, and how are they going to use the information? What would be the most compelling and useful way(s) to present the information?

Step 6: Final Presentation
You have five minutes to prepare a five-minute oral presentation to describe your evaluation to the Board. What are the key points that will most effectively communicate the essence of the evaluation, and how can these be presented in an informative and engaging way?

Step 7: Next Steps
Develop an action plan for implementing the recommendations of your evaluation. What are the key tasks and who will do them? When? What resources are needed? How will you know you have accomplished your goals?

Reflection
Review the activity: What was enjoyable about the evaluation process? What was challenging? How has your understanding and experience of evaluation changed after going through this simulation process? What would you have done differently if you knew at the beginning what you know now about evaluation? What are the pieces of the evaluation that seem most important to your project? Why, and how would you apply them to your own situation?

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STEPPING STONE 2

ORIENTATION AND TEAM-BUILDING

2

At this Stepping Stone, youth teams are introduced to the concept of research and evaluation through skill- and team-building activities. In addition to developing a strong team, youth researchers and evaluators learn about the methods they will be using, the organization or community with which they will be working, and the broader context of their project.

ACTIVITY SECTIONS

1 Introduction to Research and Evaluation

In this section, the facilitator guides the youth team through a series of interactive discussions and engaging activities around the following questions: What is research? What is evaluation? How is it useful? How is it challenging? What is youth-led research and evaluation? Why is youth-led research and evaluation important? What is the power behind doing research and evaluation—that is, behind generating knowledge and information? What are some different research and evaluation methods? What makes a good or bad researcher/evaluator?

2 Team-Building

Team-building takes place throughout the project and some of the strongest bonds will form over time. However, this period sets the stage for cooperative relationships to flourish. Creative and well-planned ice-breakers and group activities help bring the youth together as a team. Ideally, these activities occur during a weekend or overnight retreat where the team can share the experience of being together with fewer distractions.

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3 Organizational and Community Mapping

The youth team engages in a range of mapping activities as a creative way to learn more about the organization or community. By creating maps that describe the research or evaluation context in a visual or spatial form, they share their own understandings of the organization and/or community with each other, identify gaps in their collective knowledge, and develop ways to close those gaps. Connecting organizational maps to community maps can help show the relationship between the two. These maps can become data in and of themselves, as well as a useful reference point and a site on which to overlay research or evaluation findings.

4 Building Community Consciousness, Understanding Context

An understanding of the broader social, political, economic, and historical context of their project brings depth and rigor to the youth team's questions, research design, and data analysis. This understanding starts with self-awareness and expands to the community and eventually a global analysis of the social patterns and issues relevant to their project. Bringing in outside speakers, trainers, and media (e.g. videos, magazines, internet) can provide important perspectives during this phase.

5 Research and Evaluation Simulations

Once the youth have begun to work together, learn the basics of research and evaluation, and understand the organizational and community context of their work, they are ready to try a research or evaluation simulation activity. Simulation activities provide an experiential overview of the entire research or evaluation process. They give everyone a sense of where they're going and the opportunity to experiment with different research instruments and methods. This experience helps the team make informed decisions about their own project design.

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MADERA COALITION FOR COMMUNITY JUSTICE

Madera Youth Leaders
Madera, California

For over ten years, the Madera Coalition for Community Justice has been a beacon of community organizing in the Central Valley town of Madera. Taking on issues ranging from voter registration to affirmative action to racial equity in schools, it is one of the few multi-ethnic organizing groups in the area. While young people had always been a part of the coalition's campaigns, they rarely stayed involved over time. In 2000, Youth In Focus developed a project to support a sustained and informed level of participation by local youth in social justice issues. Building from the existing base of youth leaders, Youth In Focus and the Coalition supported the formation of the Madera Youth Leaders, a team of high-school aged Latinos that would undertake the first youth-led needs assessment of the issues, concerns, and aspirations of low-income youth, immigrant youth, and youth of color in Madera. The findings of their project would shape the advocacy activities of the Coalition and inform local youth organizing efforts.

To prepare for this major task, the coalition realized that the team needed to understand the culture and history of Valley communities. As part of their project orientation, the team organized a series of activities and field trips to learn more about the legacies of organizing and cultural diversity in the Valley. In meetings, the team explored key issues and strategies that local citizens had used to effect change in the past. They participated in events such as César Chavez Day, a local multicultural festival, and several regional meetings concerned with youth issues. They organized informal parties to celebrate holidays such as Chinese New Year. And they connected with other youth organizing groups to plan how they could work together on joint projects, such a series of youth policy forums.

The process of learning more about the possible applications of their work motivated the team and kept them coming back week after week. In no time, team members were able to connect their project to larger issues and expand the potential impact of their work.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY

ISSUE MAPPING

In this activity, youth researchers create a visual map of key social, cultural, economic, environmental, and political issues related to their project. Mapping helps the team first to understand the broader context of the project and then to focus on specific project themes.

Preparation

On a wall, hang three sheets of chart paper and title them "home," "school," and "community". Draw a line down the middle of each and label the sides "today" and "future."

Brainstorm

Introduc the guiding question, "What do you like about each of these places (today), and what do you want to change (for the future)?" Team members write their ideas in the appropriate spaces on the chart paper.

Group reflection

What stands out in the group's brainstorm? What are the patterns or themes? How could we make the types of changes that we listed? How have other people made these kinds of changes in the past?

Discussion

What key themes do we want to focus on? What do we want to learn about these issues? What impact do we want to have? What final product do we need to make that impact? How might we carry out our research?

Understanding a complex, school-based community center can be difficult for anyone. It can be especially challenging for youth, who usually experience organizations as the programs they attend—a soccer program, a youth leadership group, or a clinic—rather than as a system of programs and administration that is linked to other systems.

KID POWER

Community Bridges Beacon, Everett Middle School
San Francisco, California

In the 1994 Kid Power evaluation of Community Bridges Beacon (CBB), Youth In Focus used organizational mapping as a tool to help youth evaluators to understand the structure of the CBB. Starting with their own knowledge, youth evaluators brainstormed about the programs, services, and people at CBB. To fill in the gaps, they interviewed CBB staff and leadership. Drawing from this information, they created a visual map of CBB, connecting the center's mental and physical health services, enrichment activities, tutoring programs, and leadership structure. Equipped with this knowledge, Kid Power conducted a comprehensive evaluation of CBB's programs for youth. Their findings guided CBB's development as one of the first Beacon Centers in San Francisco.

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STEPPING STONE 3

RESEARCH/ EVALUATION DESIGN

At this Stepping Stone the youth team comes up with a design for the research or evaluation. The team defines its goals, final product, and research methods; develops indicators and research instruments; constructs a sample; and makes clear data collection, documentation, and analysis plans. Outside consultation on research design may be useful at this phase to support the youth team's own decision-making.

ACTIVITY SECTIONS

1 Define Goals

Clear goals are essential to every research or evaluation project. At this point, the team focuses on two types of goals: learning goals (what they want to learn about) and impact goals (what changes they hope to effect). To develop these goals, the team must reflect on the environment in which it is working, anticipating potential obstacles and identifying potential supports. With this information in mind, the team is then able to develop goals that are both ambitious and realistic.

2a Develop Standards, Indicators and Evaluation Questions
(For evaluation projects)

Evaluation questions are typically normative; that is, they compare what exists to a given set of standards, values, or goals. To do an evaluation, the team must defines the standards upon which they are basing their assessment and figure out what evidence will help them make that assessment. This process may entail reflecting on their own experiences, examining the organizational mission statement, talking with other young people, reviewing relevant research to see what others have said, and/or visiting other successful organizations. The arts (e.g., creating murals, maps, skits, videos) also provide a tangible and powerful way to construct and articulate indicators.

2b Develop Research Questions
(For research projects)

To do a research project, the team must define their research questions. These are typically either descriptive (what is happening here?) or explanatory (how or why is this happening?) The team then decides what kinds of evidence will enable them to answer those questions with enough confidence to make recommendations about next steps.

3 Define the Final Product

The team envisions their final product(s)—a written report, a video, an art exhibit, a web site, or some combination of these or others. Defining the final product shapes the overall research or evaluation process. For example, if a team decides to create a photo exhibit, their research strategy needs to include photography!

4 Design Methods, Tools, and Documentation System

Once goals, research questions, indicators and the final product have been defined, the team can focus on what information it will collect and how the data will be collected. Youth teams use a wide range of data collection strategies and instruments (e.g., interviews, focus groups, surveys, participant observation, mapping, and reviewing record data).

5 Select a Sample

Besides determining how they will collect data, the team also must decide from whom they will collect it. Different research goals and questions, populations, and audiences call for different sampling strategies and different levels of technical assistance to design them.

6 Incorporate Feedback

At this point the team presents their project design to the host organization's leadership and other central project constituents. This meeting ensures that key individuals are informed about project plans and enables the team to consider input from people who are looking to use the results of their work.

7 Develop an Action Plan

Once the team has designed methods and tools, it must develop a concrete plan for doing the data collection and documentation. The action plan outlines the timelines, tasks, and work assignments related to preparing for data collection, selecting a sample, and developing a documentation system.

E-SQUAD

St. John's Educational Thresholds Center
San Francisco, California

St. John's Educational Thresholds Center (SJETC) is a vibrant youth development center located in the Mission district of San Francisco. The home of one of the first Beacon Centers in the city, SJETC offers a wide range of programs for local elementary-, middle-, and high-school-age youth. Its staff and board are committed to youth leadership and decision-making at all levels of the organization. Young people are part of SJETC's board, staff, and youth leadership groups, and the staff is active in Community Network for Youth Development's (CNYD) learning network.
In 2001, SJETC hired E-Squad, a team of six middle school students, to evaluate how well its programs were facilitating young people's development.

The team had two goals: first to get a general read on the organization as a whole and second to answer a small set of specific questions about individual programs. E-squad created their evaluation design by looking at five supports and opportunities (based on the research of James Connell and Michele Gambone) that promote youth development—safety, skill-building, relationship-building, community engagement, decision-making and participation. As a team, they explored what each support should look like in a healthy organization and how each overlapped and influenced the others. Based on these indicators, the team developed a set of key questions for their focus group guides and surveys. The time spent up front paid off. Because the project's goals and scope were so clear, E-Squad's evaluation was both powerful and useful to the organization. The framework helped E-Squad and SJETC to define the core components of youth development and then design a comprehensive evaluation able to cut across all of SJETC's programs, generating information for both strategic and program planning.

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Teens Supporting Teens

Woodland, California

After hearing that Woodland California is considered a state "hot spot" for rates of teen pregnancy – and noticing large number of their peers getting pregnant, a number of Woodland youth decided that an immediate response was needed. In the fall of 2001, a diverse group of Woodland youth leaders joined together to form Teens Supporting Teens to create an informed and active presence for youth in guiding sexual health services and broader community supports for teens. As a first approach to their mission, the group developed a survey to assess their peers' attitudes and understandings of sexual health issues, and the kinds of support their perceive and desire in the community. To ensure that their data reflected the needs and views of the diversity of youth in Woodland they created a Spanish version of the survey, and administered both language versions in setting ranging from the local high school, health fairs, juvenile hall, local junior high schools, and the local continuation high school.

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D-MAC EVALUATORS

Jamestown Community Center

San Francisco, California

PROJECT STORY

What is youth development and what makes a good youth development organization? Over the last twenty years, researchers have set out to define a common framework for youth development. In 1999, with support of the organization, a team of Jamestown Community Center youth evaluators decided to participate in this dialogue.

That year, Jamestown Community Center hired four young people, Darwin, Max, Andrea, and Cathia (who used their initials to form their team name "D-MAC") to conduct an assessment of their programs and determine how well Jamestown was facilitating young people's development. As part of their evaluation design, D-MAC decided to create their own youth development framework. Starting with the question "What makes a happy, healthy adult?" they brainstormed long-term goals for youth development, compared their ideas with research performed by scholars, then took a step back and mapped out the supports and opportunities young people would need to get from Jamestown and similar centers.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY

EVALUATION DESIGN: BUBBLE MAPS

In this activity team members create bubble maps to develop indicators and questions.

Lay out the framework for your evaluation. For example, if your evaluation is focused on how well an after-school program fosters youth development, address the question "what are the core elements of an ideal program that is set up to support youth development?"

Create a set of questions about evidence based on your framework. For example, if emotional and physical safety are two of your core requirements for youth development, then ask "how would we know if this organization is emotionally and physically safe for young people?" Put each of these questions at the center of a large piece of paper.

For each question, brainstorm answers and record how ideas branch off from the central question. (See example). Ask follow-up questions to pull more detail from the group.

Once the brainstorm is finished, analyze your bubble map: What ideas connect on the map? What are the general themes? What is missing? Based on these themes, what are key indicators? What kinds of data should you consider collecting?

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4 STEPPING STONE 4 SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Skill development can and should occur throughout the project; however, because the team just designed a research or evaluation plan at Stepping Stone 3, now is an important time to reflect on the skills they may need to carry out their work. The facilitator and the team assess their need to build skills typically required for a youth-led research or evaluation project: technical skills (e.g. word-processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheets, video or tape recording), critical thinking/analysis skills, research skills (constructing good questions, interviewing, observation, facilitation, story collection, math skills), documentation skills (note-taking, sketching, writing summaries), organizing skills (scheduling, organizing data), artistic skills (photography, drawing, video production), communication skills (writing, public speaking, listening, negotiating), and other skills specific to the project's goals, methods, and final product. Youth practice these skills through creative, engaging activities that further their work on the project.

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ACTIVITY SECTIONS

1 Basic Research Skills

By now the team is accustomed to working together and is familiar with research and evaluation concepts, methods, and tools. This section helps them develop some basic research skills (e.g., note-taking, active listening).

2 Other Special Capacities and Training

Every project has special informational or skill needs that go beyond basic research skills. In this section the youth may practice their writing skills, or the entire team might need a special training on video production if it plans to create a video as a final product. Other topics to consider are the history of youth making change and strategies for working in multicultural, multilingual settings.

3 Practicing Research

Hands-on activities and role plays can help the team polish and practice their newly acquired skills. This section includes skill-building activities that reflect the specific research or evaluation developed by the team.

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SAMPLE TOOL

POINTS FOR COMPLETING AN EVALUATION TEST RUN

Develop the instrument as far as the team can take it. The instrument does not need to be complete, but it does need to be functional in order to be worth testing.

- **Do some role plays to try out using the instrument.**
- **Find a good test site where the team feels comfortable and has access to people.**
- **Create a clear process for improving both the tool and the team's skills.**

Roundhouse Council Indian Education Center
Greenville, Plumas County, California

Located in the northern Sierra Nevada mountain region in Plumas County, California, the Roundhouse Council is a hub of Greenville's Mountain Maidu community and forms part of a statewide network of California Indian Education Centers. In 2000, the Roundhouse Council hired a team of youth evaluators to design a new watershed education program and summer camp for the network. The youth team decided to create a survey to get input from indigenous youth from around the state. Neither the young people nor their coordinator had ever done a survey before, so they decided to test the survey in their community before sending it out to other Indian Education Centers.

Indian Days, the annual northern Sierra powwow, was the natural place to try out the survey. The youth looked forward to the event and felt comfortable testing their skills publicly because they were on familiar turf before a friendly audience. Everyone they asked filled out one of the questionnaires, and by the end of the day the team had collected over one hundred of them.

Following the powwow, the team reconvened to discuss which questions worked, which didn't, and why. After revising the survey, they sent it out to Indian Education Centers throughout northern California.

The test run not only strengthened the survey but also helped team members feel more ownership and confidence over the project and their skills. By the end of the testing process, team members had a sophisticated understanding of how to develop questions, administer surveys, and analyze data.

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STEPPING STONE 5
DATA COLLECTION AND DOCUMENTATION

At this Stepping Stone, the youth researchers and evaluators collect and document data and provide constructive feedback on each other's work. The facilitator and youth team strike a balance between sticking to their earlier plans and exercising enough flexibility to respond to new and unforeseen situations.

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ACTIVITY SECTIONS

1 Organize a System of Support

New researchers and evaluators need support and mentoring, particularly as they enter the unfamiliar world of data collection and documentation and begin to work more independently. Here the team institutes a strong support system that includes regular check-ins, debriefings, and group problem-solving.

2 Confirm Logistics

Important logistical concerns that are addressed at this point include 1) making a firm schedule for data collection, including dates, times, and designated sites/subjects; 2) creating and compiling any necessary materials; 3) testing and organizing equipment; 4) planning transportation to and from research sites; 5) planning for ongoing communication within the team; and 6) making a checklist that outlines important data collection and documentation steps.

3 Collect Data

Data collection is the core of any research or evaluation process. While the youth are out and about, the facilitator plays a critical role that includes 1) motivating the team; 2) making sure they have what they need; 3) offering reminders of their goals, schedule, and the skills and techniques they have developed over the past few Stepping Stones; 4) troubleshooting; 5) following up on any logistical problems; and 6) ensuring careful documentation and storage of data.

4 Document and Organize Data

Documenting and storing data as quickly, accurately, and consistently as possible is key. At this phase, the team reflects on the systems developed earlier, revises them if they are not adequate, and makes sure they are being implemented.

Juvenile Justice Evaluation
San Francisco, California

PROJECT STORY

The Juvenile Justice Evaluation was a project of Rising Youth for Social Equity in cooperation with Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, Delancey Street Foundation, the Center for the Study of Social Change at the University of California at Berkeley, and Youth In Focus. Youth In Focus helped a team of twenty youth researchers evaluate San Francisco's new Juvenile Justice Action Plan, a plan designed to revamp the city's juvenile justice system by diverting funds to incarceration alternatives. They researched the needs of young people in target neighborhoods and developed indicators for measuring the success of the plan's projects.

Most of the youth researchers had had experience in the juvenile justice system. Early on, they realized that they needed to collect data from the young people who would be affected by the projects the most—youth living, working, or hanging out on the streets. The team created two surveys: one longer survey to use in school classrooms and a second, shorter "street survey." Team members who felt comfortable on the streets became the street research team. By putting the time and energy into collecting two sets of data, the team was able to get a real sense of what different youth in the community needed. Throughout the data collection process, the team used check-in meetings to develop their skills and strengthen their work. Adult evaluators, policy-makers, and advocates provided feedback and support.

SAMPLE TOOL

SUPPORT MEETING SAMPLE AGENDA (2 HOURS)

1. Icebreaker: (10 minutes)

2. Examine the week's results: data collection activities (40 minutes)

- What went well and what could have been better?
- What support do we need to improve our work?

3. Skill-building or team-building activity (40 minutes)

Sample skill-building activities:

- Role plays: difficult interviews, good/bad interviewing, focus group facilitation
- Critique field notes: how can they be strengthened? What other follow-up questions could we have asked?
- Photography: critique the team's photo documentation, take photographs that relate to the team's research

4. Review the week's schedule and answer questions (20) minutes

- Confirm schedules for individual team members
- Review the logistics for the week's data collection
- Check materials and equipment

5. Check out (10) minutes

STEPPING STONE 6

6 DATA ANALYSIS

The youth research/evaluation team now has mountains of information and must focus on figuring out what it all means. Youth comments on this process range from "boring" (sifting through data) to "cool" (discovering what people are saying). The challenge is to maintain rigor while keeping it engaging. The summaries of findings and recommendations developed at this stage provide the substance of the final report, presentation, and next steps.

ACTIVITY SECTIONS

1. First Impressions

As a first step of the analysis process, the team tries to predict findings based on initial impressions of the data. Acknowledging any pre-conceptions that have emerged help prepare the team to see the data for what it is, rather than for what they thought or hoped it would be.

2. Organize Data

The team organizes data and the data analysis process into manageable pieces that reflect the evidence needs identified back in Stepping Stone 3. The nature of this process depends on the scope of the project and the type of data collected. For example, working with interview notes requires a very different approach than working with survey data.

3. Analyze Data and Develop Findings

A critical part of the team's job is to summarize and interpret the data for others to understand and use. Findings need to be clear and backed up by solid evidence, and analysis should probe beyond the obvious. For example, in one project the number one response to "What do youth most need in this town?" was "fast food." Team members considered the meaning behind the answer and hypothesized that youth not only wanted fast food, but also needed safe places to hang out where they could be themselves and not be harassed. They then checked out this hypothesis through focus groups.

4. Develop Recommendations

In this activity the team reflects on their project goals and their audience, considers their findings, and comes up with a set of constructive, well-supported recommendations for action.

5. Preview the Analysis

At this point the team shares their emerging analysis with the host organization's leadership and other key individuals. This meeting helps leaders prepare for the publication of findings, offers the chance to discuss any alternative interpretations of data and/or especially contentious issues and enables the team to practice discussing their analysis.

6. Reflection

Team assessments of the project process and its effects on themselves and their communities help members reflect on what they have learned and make suggestions for future youth-led research and evaluation projects. Writing up evaluations at this stage allows the team to include their suggestions in final presentations.

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YOUTH IMPACT

San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and their Families

San Francisco, California

In the spring of 2001, the Youth IMPACT team gathered together one afternoon for their weekly meeting. Exhausted and excited, they had just collected data from over forty youth-serving organizations across San Francisco. Their data included over 850 questionnaires, transcripts from 35 focus groups, and summaries of 35 program observations. Their task was to analyze the data to answer two questions: How well are youth being served by community-based organizations funded by the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and their Families (DCYF)? And what makes a trustworthy youth-serving organization? Given the amount and the complexity of the data, this was no small task.

By far the biggest challenge was to analyze the 850 surveys. Youth In Focus helped the ten Youth IMPACT evaluators tackle this challenge with Analyze-it Kits. The kits helped team members focus their data analysis and break it down into bite-sized pieces. Each Analyze-it Kit had a set of key questions and relevant statistical analyses of survey data (Analyses were run by JMPT Consulting). Team members worked in small groups to complete the tasks set out in the kits. When all the kits were completed, the team was finished with the survey analysis.

The next task was to analyze the focus groups. The whole team combed the data for key trends and evidence to back up findings. A quote scavenger hunt was playfully organized to find and pull spicy statements from the notes.

All their hard work paid off. On the strength of their analysis, the team developed the Ten Commandments for Youth Programs, which were published in Youth Voices Inspiring Positive Change. The commandments spelled out ten must-haves for every youth program in San Francisco. DCYF took Youth IMPACT's findings very seriously. At a 2002 bidders conference, DCYF staff handed the booklet to every organization applying for funding and said that all proposals would be partially evaluated based on Youth Impact's ten commandments. DCYF has committed to continue Youth IMPACT for at least another two years and to make youth-led evaluation "the way the City does business" in the words of former DCYF Director Deborah Alvarez-Rodriguez.

1 Thou must have a high and plentiful supply of great snacks

2 Thou must have flexible hours

3 All who choose to work at thy program must have a great attitude and treat everyone with respect

4 Thou shalt hire staff that reflect thy communities and experiences of youth thou serve

5 Thy computer must connect the Internet

SAMPLE TOOL

The following handout, written for 21st Century Community Learning Center youth researchers in Portola, California, provided clear guidelines about what people needed to produce as they were developing findings from their data.

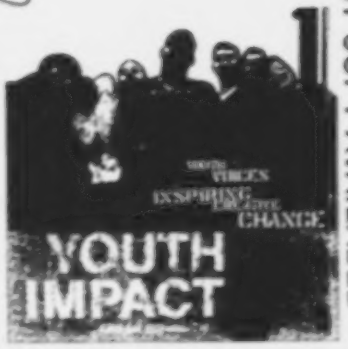
Creating Findings
Portola New Directions 2000

You are responsible for developing findings (statements about what we learned) based on one portion of our data. Develop your findings by answering the question assigned to you. Write up your answer as a one-page story. This will be a rough draft that will go into our final report.

As you write the summary of findings for your question, think about ways to illustrate the main point. What images would convey this message? (We'll get disposable cameras next week to take some of these pictures.) What quotes from our raw data might make the point?

Steps

1. Review the survey data that we summarized in our last session.
2. Write up to one page to tell the story contained in the data. Use the data to answer the main questions that you are assigned. Answer the question as completely as possible. If there are differences in how various types of students answered a question, describe these differences. If most students agreed on a point, note how much agreement there was.
3. Develop a list of images and quotes that would illustrate the story.
4. Bring the typed-up story and list to the meeting next week.



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THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL YOUTH PROGRAM*

Thou must provide enough supplies for thy participants

7 **Thou shalt research out into the community to know thy neighbors**

8 **Thou must have a clean and spacious environment, free of all rodents**

9 **All thy participants must enjoy thy program and spread laughter throughout thy CBO**

10 **Thou shalt involve thy youth in the evaluation of thy programs!**

*Excerpted from Youth Voices Inspiring Creative Change, Youth IMPACT Youth-Led Evaluation, 2001

STEPPING STONE 7

FINAL REPORT, PRESENTATION, AND CELEBRATION

At this Stepping Stone, youth researchers and evaluators make their results public. The team creates a final product in order to share their results with key decision-makers and other constituents. They also organize a presentation for other youth and community members and celebrate a job well done!

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ACTIVITY SECTIONS

1 Complete the Final Product

The substance of this activity depends on the youth team's earlier decisions about the nature of their final product and its dissemination, and the types of data and documentation they were able to compile. Examples of final products include art and photo exhibits, booklets, videos, written reports, and 'zines. The high-quality final products typically produced demand the hard work and unique talents of each team member.

2 Create a Written Report

If the final product is not a written report, youth teams often also write up their research and evaluation findings. Written reports allow the youth and other stakeholders and decision-makers to reference, discuss, and use evaluation findings over time.

3 Organize Presentations

Oral presentations of evaluation findings are a critical part of the research or evaluation project because they create opportunities for dialogue between the youth team, stakeholders, and decision-makers. Fun activities help the team develop creative, accessible, and effective presentations.

4 Celebrate!

After so much time and effort, the team deserves a big celebration! This is an opportunity for the youth both to celebrate their own work and to be recognized by the facilitators, the organization, their families, and the broader community.

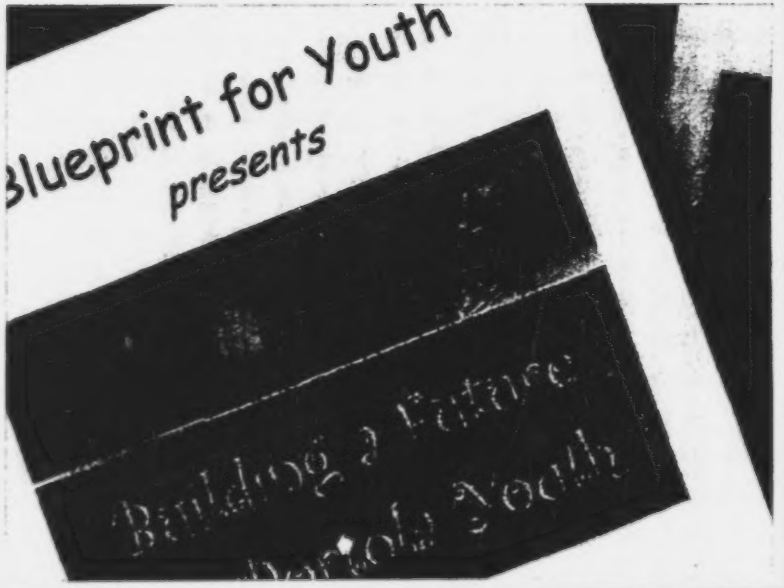
THE YOUTH COLLECTIVE

SOYAC (Serving Our Youth And Community)
San Francisco, California

One cold January night in the heart of San Francisco's SOMA district, artists, youth, policy-makers, youth workers and parents crowded into a small community theater. Lining the halls and filling the seats, buzzing with chatter and anticipation, they were all there for a gala event—the debut of a documentary on the SOYAC Youth Collective and their youth-led needs assessment of the SOMA district.

Home to thousands of young people and immigrant families, SOMA has historically been a low-income community right next to downtown San Francisco. In the shadow of tremendous development, SOMA youth have remained relatively invisible.

With funds from the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, the Youth Collective set out to make SOMA youth visible—to the city, planners, and their own neighbors. They organized the first-ever needs assessment of SOMA youth through which they mapped current services, unmet needs, and priorities for future investment in the neighborhood. Their research culminated in several outstanding products—a color booklet, a video, a web page, and the gala event—to publicize their findings. The team will use these products to advocate for SOMA youth priorities to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, the Redevelopment Agency, neighborhood networks, and funders. Youth leaders from around the Bay Area and as far away as Harlem have viewed the video as an inspiration for their own activities.



SAMPLE TOOL

SAMPLE TABLE OF CONTENTS

The following is a basic structure for a youth-led evaluation or research report. Youth teams often increase the power and effectiveness of their reports by integrating photography, drawing, storytelling, and poetry into the text.

1. Introduction
- What is this booklet?
- Who is the youth team?
- What is the organization and what is its mission? or What is important to know about this community?
- What are the goals of this youth-led project?
- What were the top five findings and recommendations?

2. Methodology
- What were the main research questions?
- What were the team's goals?
- How did the team do the research?

3. Findings
- What community/organization maps did the team create (if any)?
- What did the team learn from the research?

4. Recommendations
- Based on the findings, what recommendations for action does the team have (for decision-makers, other youth, community activists, etc.)?
- What additional research needs to be done and why?
- What are the team's recommendations for youth-led research, evaluation, and planning in the organization or community?

5. Appendices
- Team member bios
- Team instruments
- Thank yous and acknowledgements

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8 STEPPING STONE 8 NEXT STEPS

While much of the information generated by the project has been shared through presentations and reports, the team will probably need to further develop and promote their findings and recommendations if they want to see real and lasting change. At this final Stepping Stone, the team develops a strategic plan to transform their research into action, a process that involves planning within the team, as well as with key decision-makers, stakeholders and leaders in the organization and community. In this step, the team learns to prioritize issues and recommendations that surfaced in the research/evaluation and develop a timeline for achieving several specific goals. Youth evaluators also find out how to directly link research and evaluation to action, and prepare to put their new critical thinking, leadership, research and planning skills to use within the project context and in the broader scope of their lives.

ACTIVITY SECTIONS

1 Develop an Action Plan for Change

Action planning often starts out with a brainstorm of ideas. After the brainstorming phase, team members identify their top priorities. The action plan identifies clear goals, strategies, and timelines for advancing the team's findings and recommendations.

2 Develop and Distribute a Proposal

A proposal is a document that outlines a problem or problems and suggests actions that will address them. Unlike the action plan, which is generated for the team itself, the proposal is written with organizational leaders, key decision-makers, and stakeholders as its intended audience. The team carefully organizes and edits a proposal based on its action plan to distribute to a short list of key decision-makers and stakeholders.

3 Host Strategy Meetings

The team plans and facilitates strategy meetings with stakeholders and decision-makers to discuss and develop support for their proposal. Unlike the presentation of findings, strategy meetings are discussions in which participants at all levels of the organization make specific commitments to action.

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PROJECT STORY

Plumas Youth Network
Plumas County, California

Tucked into the mountains of northeastern California, Plumas County is one of the most rural areas in the state. The county has four main towns that are relatively isolated from each other. Young people are surrounded by an inspiring landscape, but generally have little access to youth leadership opportunities. In 1999, Youth In Focus worked with teams of young people associated with local 21st Century Community Learning Centers to organize youth-led needs assessments. Based on their research, the teams developed a set of creative recommendations for new services, youth-run businesses, and youth organizing efforts.

After publishing their findings, the two teams and their adult allies started meeting to talk about county-wide issues and how to implement their project recommendations. They soon discovered that the major barrier to moving ahead was the fragmentation of youth services in their community. They needed a vehicle to organize the support of adult allies and to support the development of youth leadership.

These meetings kicked off a major organizing effort that led to the development of the Plumas Youth Network (PYN), a community-wide network of youth and adult allies. Over a year-long process, the network created an executive committee, developed a mission statement, and hired a network coordinator.

The PYN Mission Statement reads, "The Plumas Youth Network is a collaborative of youth, adults, agencies, and organizations working in partnership to increase communication and awareness of opportunities and programs for youth. The Network provides a forum that empowers youth to become involved locally and countywide in a variety of youth leadership efforts. Collaborative partners are strong advocates for youth and the issues identified as most important to them and support youth activities and projects that build a strong sense of self-esteem and respect."

The network also supported youth organizing in specific communities. Youth involved in the network launched efforts to develop a youth-run center in one town and a mentoring program in another. In the future, PYN will provide the opportunity for youth leaders and their allies to collaborate and advocate for county-level policies and funding that will benefit youth.

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E-SQUAD

St. John's Educational Thresholds Center
San Francisco, California

When St. John's Educational Thresholds Center (SJETC) set out to do youth-led research and evaluation, the staff and board wanted to establish a permanent role for it in the organization. Their interest in the concept grew out of strategic planning and a long-term commitment to both institutional learning and young people's development.

As the first step, SJETC launched a pilot project with the help of Youth In Focus, hiring E-Squad, a team of middle school evaluators, to perform an assessment of all its programs. A current staff member volunteered to be lead facilitator on top of running other youth leadership programs. The executive director and the rest of the staff acted as her support.

Halfway through the project, the staff realized that SJETC had underestimated what was needed to sustain youth-led research and evaluation, acknowledging that it would need to be a program in itself, not just a one-shot project or a single development tool. Through a series of reflection meetings, they identified the resources necessary to sustain the program over time. The executive director immediately started fundraising to support an additional staff position; funds for final projects, snacks, and equipment; and increased meeting time for the youth team. With youth input, the staff and board also created a plan to integrate youth-led research and evaluation and planning strategies.

3 APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A

RESOURCES/ REFERENCES

This appendix includes readings, manuals and organizations that may be helpful to understanding and implementing youth-led research, evaluation, and planning. This is not intended to serve as a comprehensive resource list but rather a selective sampling from the diverse fields represented in this guide.

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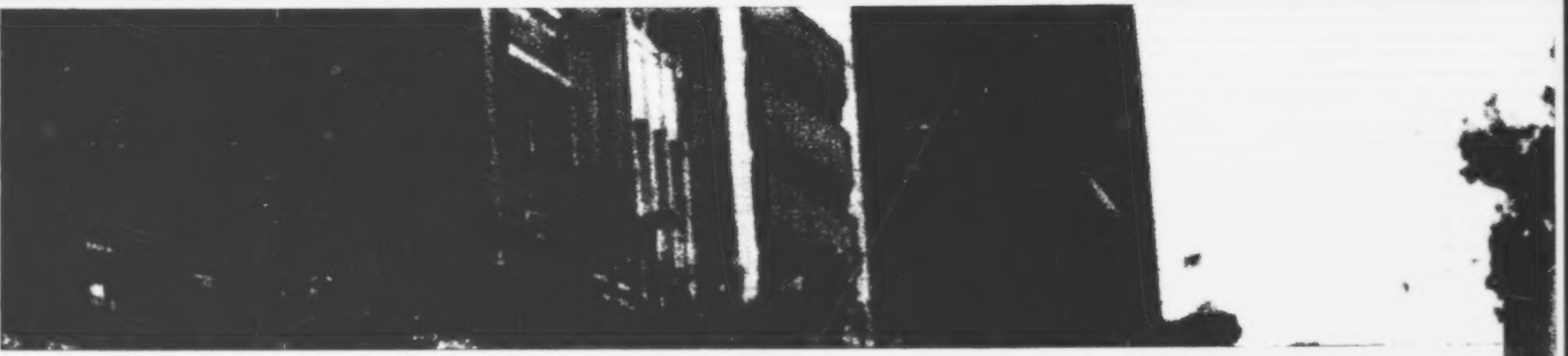

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Indianapolis, IN 46208
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ypress@in.net
www.ypress.org

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Jamestown Community Center
3382 26th Street
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 647-4709

Madera Youth Leaders
c/o Baldwin Moy
Madera Coalition for Community Justice
117 South Lake St./P.O. Box 1707
Madera, CA 93638
(559) 674-5671

Plumas Youth Network
c/o Janet Canty
72 Commercial Street
Portola, CA 96122
(530) 832-1827

Portola New Directions
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Portola, CA 96122
(530) 832-1827

Roundhouse Council Indian Education Center
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roundhse@inreach.com

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oasis@sfoasis.org
www.sfoasis.org

St. John's Educational Thresholds Center
3040 16th Street
San Francisco, CA 94110
www.sjetc.org

Teens Supporting Teens
c/o Pat Dumais
Woodland High School
21 N. West Street
Woodland, CA 95695
(530) 662-4628 x222 or x283

Youth IMPACT/San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and their Families
1390 Market Street, Suite 900
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APPENDIX B SAMPLE BUDGETS

The organization leading and hosting a Youth REP project should plan and budget for costs related to coordinating the project, compensating the youth team and providing the necessary resources. Typical budget line items include project coordinator salary, youth team compensation, refreshments, project resources (final product production, copies, pens, video, camera, cassette tapes, etc.), technical support (e.g. data analysis), transportation, meeting space, and a celebration fund. In some cases, organizations hire an intermediary/training organization to assist in the development and coaching of the project. Organizations have found creative ways to limit the monetary expense of these internal costs and stay within their budget capacities by enlisting volunteers, sharing resources with other organizations, and soliciting donations. Following are two sample budgets for youth-led evaluation projects.

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SAMPLE BUDGET 1

FIVE-MONTH YOUTH-LED RESEARCH OR EVALUATION PROJECT AT AN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

In this project the team evaluates one program or small organization or conducts research on one focused issue, does one round of data collection, and creates one relatively brief final product (such as a booklet or simple report). They bring in outside support to train and coach facilitators, provide technical support for the youth, and coach the organization on sustaining this level of youth leadership. Examples of similar projects are D-MAC at Jamestown Community and e-squad at St. John's Educational Thresholds Center (see stories in Part II, Evaluation Design).

PERSONNEL

NON-PERSONNEL ITEMS

CONSULTING

BUDGET ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
Program Staff Facilitator A facilitator will need to devote at least four hours a week to meeting with the youth team, as well as an additional four hours a week for project planning, coordination, and Youth In Focus coaching.	160 hours (8 hrs/wk x 22 wks) @ $22/hr	$3872
Program Assistant	(8 hrs/wk x 22 wks) @ $10/hr	$1760
Youth Team Compensation The youth will together devote hundreds of hours to assessing the school environment, and we recommend that they receive compensation for their efforts. This might include vouchers for movie tickets, gift certificates, an amusement park trip at the end of the project, or a stipend.	one stipend @ $200 x 12 youth	$2400
Refreshments for Meetings/Trainings Healthy and tasty snacks are a crucial part of productive after-school meetings!	snacks for 20 weeks @$20/wk	$400
Project Resources and Supplies Supply budgets vary depending on the final project goal (i.e. a simple report costs less than a glossy publication or a video). This basic supply budget includes pens, paper, folders, disposable cameras, tape recorders, tapes and batteries, and photocopying costs.		$1,000
Transportation for Youth This travel budget allows youthto present their work to local leaders, other organizations, and/or local conferences.	10 youth x $15/ea	$150
Final Product Fund Professional printing or production of a final report or video.		$1,000
Celebration Fund It's important to celebrate a job well done. This budget reflects a cost estimate to have a party or go to a movie.	10 youth x $20/ea	$200
	Subtotal (Project Costs)	**$10,782**
Technical Support and Training Outside support can provide training and technical skills to staff and youth (e.g., research methods) and can facilitate ongoing communication between youth, staff, and administrators about the project and its implications for organizational and community change.	20 days @ $500/day	$10,000
	Subtotal (Consulting)	**$10,000**
	GRAND TOTAL	**$20,782**

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SAMPLE BUDGET 2

YEAR-LONG EVALUATION PROJECT OF A CITY-WIDE OR REGIONAL NETWORK OF ORGANIZATIONS

This budget reflects a more complex project. In this project, teams are evaluating a regional system or network of youth organizations, or conducting a large-scale research project. They do more than one round of data collection and create a professionally produced final product (such as a report designed by a graphic designer). An example of a similar project is Youth IMPACT (see stories in Part II, Getting Ready and Data Analysis). The scale of the project is keyed to the scale of the intended outcomes (e.g., systems change).

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BUDGET ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
Project Facilitator/Coordinator	Full time + benefits (1 yr)	$45,000
Administrative Support	1/4 time (1yr)	$8,000
Compensation for youth team	$9/hour @ 10 hr/wk x 10 youth + payroll taxes (50 weeks)	$50,000
Guest trainer fees	10 two-hour workshops at $100 each	$1,000
Refreshments for Meetings/Trainings		$2,000
Project Resources Copies, pens, video, camera, cassette tapes, software etc.		$5,000
Transportation for Youth Bus passes		$500
Meeting and Retreat Space		$2,500
Final Product Fund Design, production, dissemination		$20,000
Celebration Fund Refreshments, entertainment, publicity		$1,000
	Subtotal	$135,000
Organizational Oversight/Administration	5% of total	$6,750
	Subtotal (Project Costs)	**$141,750**
Youth REP Coaching and Training	50 days @ $500/day	$25,000
Technical Support (e.g. data analysis)	20 hours @ $75/hr	$1,500
	Subtotal (Consultation)	**$26,500**
	GRAND TOTAL	**$168,250**

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APPENDIX C
SAMPLE TIMELINES

Youth-led research and evaluation project timelines can span from three months to a year or more. Timelines depend on the complexity and scope of the project. They also depend on the time that the team and staff have available on a weekly or daily basis. Following are two sample timelines, one for a four-month project and one for a one-year project. In both cases, we assume that the team is meeting twice a week for two hours at minimum, with additional time scheduled during the more intensive phases of data collection and data analysis.

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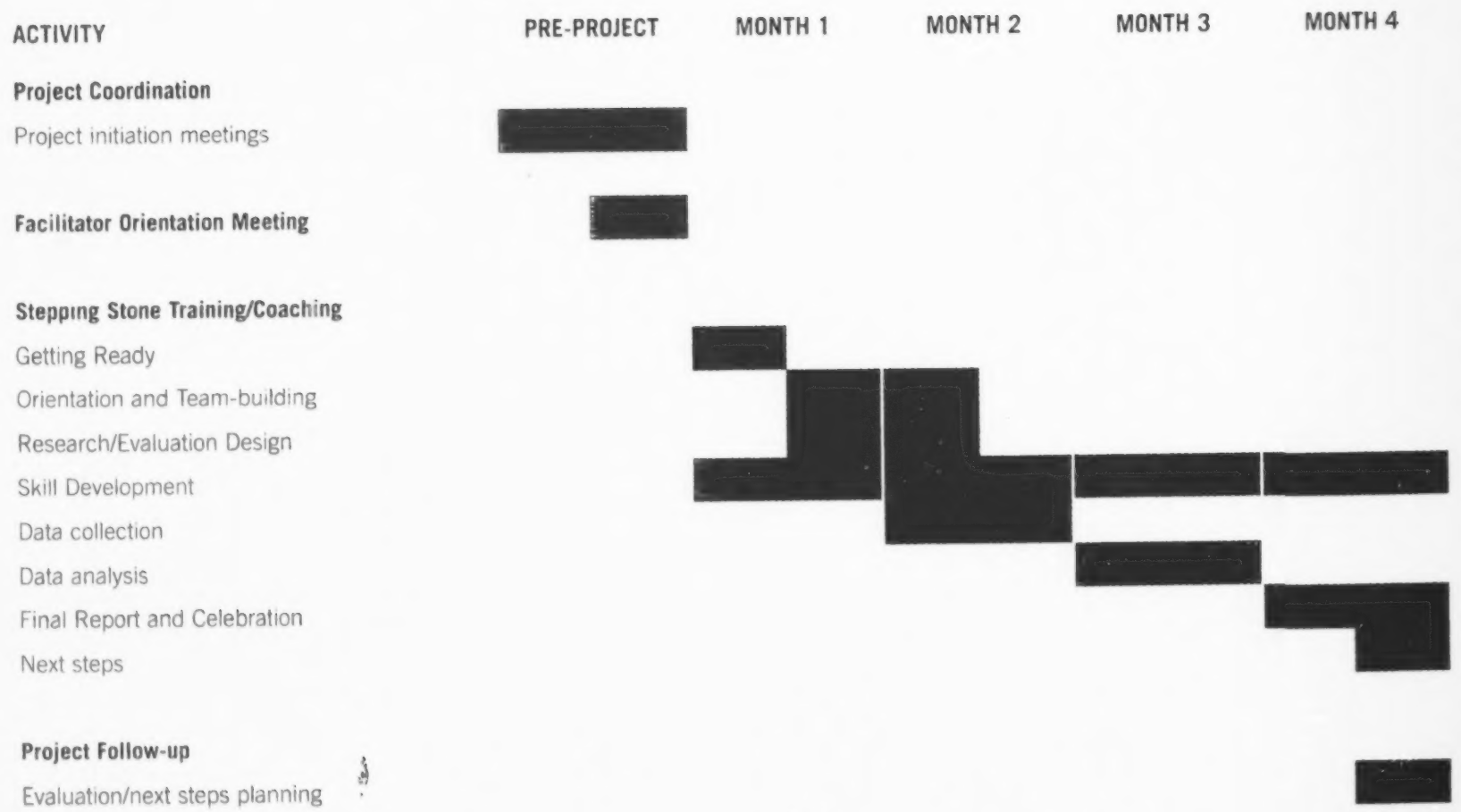
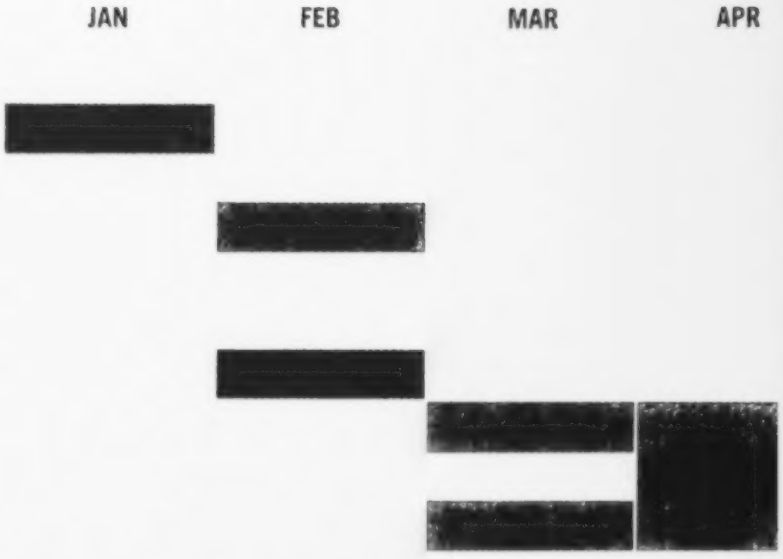
SAMPLE TIMELINE 1

FOUR-MONTH TIMELINE

Short timelines require three things: a very focused project scope, limited data collection and intensive team meetings. With a four-month project timeline, teams can expect to evaluate one small organization or research one focused issue, do one round of data collection, and create one relatively simple final product (such as a booklet or simple report). With more meetings and/or more behind-the scenes support, teams can intensify an element (final product, scope, data collection methods) of their work. Examples of four-month projects are D-MAC at Jamestown Community, SOYAC, and E-Squad at St. John's Educational Thresholds Center (see stories in Part II, Evaluation Design).


ACTIVITY
PRE-PROJECT
MONTH 1
MONTH 2
MONTH 3
MONTH 4
Project Coordination
Project initiation meetings
Facilitator Orientation Meeting
Stepping Stone Training/Coaching
Getting Ready
Orientation and Team-building
Research/Evaluation Design
Skill Development
Data collection
Data analysis
Final Report and Celebration
Next steps
Project Follow-up
Evaluation/next steps planning

SAMPLE TIMELINE 2



ger timelines can allow for more complex projects and more polished final products. With a 12-m.nth timeline, teams can take on a bigger project pe—such as evaluating a system or network of organizations (see stories about Youth IMPACT in Part II, Getting Ready and Data Analysis), or earching a broader community issue such as juvenile justice issues (see story on the Juvenile Justice Evaluation project in Part II, Data Collection). y can consider doing multiple rounds of data collection, such as distributing surveys, analyzing them, and then convening focus groups to probe ues that surfaced in the survey analysis. They can also invest more in the final product production, developing products such as slide shows, videos, nore polished reports. As with a shorter project, teams will have to make some careful choices about their relative priorities.

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Youth In Focus partners with community-based organizations, public agencies, foundations, schools, labor, and networks in the San Francisco Bay Area, Central Valley, and Sierra Nevada regions of California. Periodically we take on projects outside these locations. Our primary commitment is to underserved youth populations, including youth of color, low income youth, immigrant youth, and lesbian/gay/bisexual youth. Current Youth REP projects fall into three broad and overlapping categories: community/youth development, public health, and public school improvement. Youth In Focus is supported by private foundations, fee for service contracts, and individual donors. Generous support for this guide was provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The San Francisco Foundation, and the Goundeck Family Fund.

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